[*Translation*]

Arrears of Excise duty Against Big Industries

3785. SHRI RAM NARAIN BERWA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of big industries against whom excise duty amounting to Rupees one crore or more in outstanding; and

(b) the progress made in recovering this amount during the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR): (a) There are 161 industrial units against whom excise duty amounting to Rs. 1 Crore or more is outstanding.

(b) The outstanding amounts are mostly linked with Court cases and cases before Customs, Excise and Gold Control Appellate Tribunal and other quasi-judicial authorities and recoveries have been stayed. However, the amounts of Central Excise arrears recovered during the last three years are as under;

		(Rs. in crores)
1.	1988-89	137.28 approx.
2.	1989-90	122.35 approx.
4.	1990-91	141.98 approx.

Raids Conduced In Mertropolitan Cities for Recovery of Customs Duty

3786. SHRI RAM NARAIN BERWA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of raids conducted in the metropolitan cities during the last three years to unearth the cases of customs duty evasion ;

(b) the outcome thereof ; and

(c) the amount of customs duty recovered and the number of persons prosecuted ?

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF . FINANCE (SHRI. RAMESHWAR THAKUR): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Long Term Cotton Policy

3787. SHRI RAMESHWAR PATIDAR: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to formulate a long term cotton policy ; and

(b) if so, when and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI ASHOK GEHLOT): (a) and (b). Government's endeavour is to provide remunerative prices to the cotton growers and to make cotton available to the domestic textile industry in adequate quantity and at reasonable prices. As the production of cotton is subject to the vagaries of weather conditions, it is not possible to make a long term forecast on these aspects.

[*English*]

Indo-US Trade Relations

3788. SHRI R. SURENDER REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the United States has expressed its preparedness to negotiate increased access in all areas including textiles which comprises of almost 25 percent of I access in all areas including textiles which comprises of almost 25 percent of India's export to U.S. ;

(b) if so, whether United States approach towards India has improved ; and

(c) the steps being taken to improve the trade relations between the two countries ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) to (c). Negotiations on market access, including o textiles are being carried out in the Uruguay Round. The United States is also participating in the negotiations. The negotiations are supplemented by bilateral consultations and negotiations as and when necessary.

A new bilateral agreement between the US and India under the MFA was consulted on 22nd November, 1991 regarding access levels for India's textiles and clothing products for 1992. According to this, there will be increase in the quotas for certain products. In respect of some products certain additional flexibilities will be available which will result in increased export opportunities. It is expected that, as a result of these changes, there will be a significant increase in the access to US market during 1992.

Consultations are held between the two governments at political and official levels both bilaterally and multilaterally to address their respective concern on trade and related economic policies and to consider measures to reduce and eliminate impediments to trade and investment flows. Through the Joint Business Council, representatives of the Industries of both countries also periodically exchange views.

Repurchase of Gold from Union Bank of Switzerland

3789. SHRI R. SURENDER REDDY : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the amount taken by the Government from the Union Bank of Switzerland as per the agreement dated May 18th, 1991 for sale of gold with repurchase option; and

(b) the time by which the entire quantity of gold is proposed to be repurchased by the Government ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR): (a) No amount has been taken by the Government from the Union Bank of Switzerland. However, State Bank of India (SBI) utilised about 20 metric tonnes of gold leased by government of India for raising foreign currency resources amounting to US$ 200.4 million vide SBI's agreement dated May 18, 1991 with Union Bank of Switzerland.

(b) The gold has already been repurchased by the State Bank of India. The Government intends to transfer this gold to the Reserve Bank of India, and thus add to our official gold reserves.

[*Translation*]

National Permit Policy for Passenger Buses

3791. SHRI RAMESHWAR PATIDAR : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to formulate a national permit policy for